

Including More Vegetables

Benefits of Vegetable Intake:

- Source of both soluble and insoluble fibres
- Rich source of vitamins and minerals
- High in antioxidants and other compounds (phytochemicals) that confer health benefits including reducing risk of disease
- Improves immune system
- Vegetables are alkaline, which helps to balance body pH; an acidic pH caused by an imbalanced diet is associated with various health problems
- Anti-inflammatory properties
- Very low in calories; they provide the feeling of satiety and are high in volume
- High in water content, therefore contributes to fluid intake
- Increasing vegetable intake is associated with weight loss
- Studies have found that individuals with a healthy BMI as well as individuals who have lost weight successfully, consistently consume 5 or more servings of vegetables (and fruit) per day at least 5 days per week

Sneaking More Vegetables Into Your Diet:

- **Puree vegetables and add them into sauce, such as pasta sauce. You won't taste them but they will add more fibre and water content to your meal, making it less calorically dense and also more filling; this has been shown to result in less calories consumed.**
- **If making a basic protein shake, a cup of spinach and/or kale can be blended in and easily masked. Remember to keep fruit in moderation, aiming for a maximum of 1 serving per shake and using sugar-free liquids such as water, almond milk or skim milk.**
- **Replace pasta or rice noodles with vegetable based noodles such as yam noodles, zucchini noodles, or spaghetti squash**
- **Make your own vegetable noodles out of zucchini, carrots, etc., but using a spiralizer**
- **Scramble eggs with a serving of vegetables such as peppers, onions, spinach, mushrooms. etc., or incorporate vegetables into an omelet**
- **Use a dip to eat raw vegetables with. Healthy fats can help some of the nutrients in vegetables to absorb better. If the use of a dip helps to increase vegetable intake then this is worth it, just cut down some calories elsewhere in the day.**
- **Make a healthy pizza. Use a Portobello mushroom as the "dough" and pile with vegetables and low fat cheese and bake.**
- **For dinner replace the serving of starch with a second serving of vegetables.**
- **Include a salad before a meal. Those who include salad before dinner tend to eat less calories overall. Be creative with different types of lettuces, leafy greens, and dressings.**
- **Use avocado to make a cream sauce instead of full fat Alfredo sauce**
- **Use mashed avocado in place of mayonnaise or butter for a sandwich or wrap**
- **Replace a tortilla with leaf lettuce and have a lettuce-leaf wrap instead**
- **Cauliflower can be mashed and can replace or be added to mashed potatoes**
- **Homemade soups are a fantastic way to camouflage a ton of vegetables and use up any that are starting to go bad. Examples: minestrone soup, butternut squash soup, pea soup, mushroom soup**
- **Blend sautéed vegetables such as squash, onions, carrots, etc., into (extra lean) ground beef to use for meatballs or homemade hamburger patties**
- **Serve soups, chili and stews in a hollowed out tomato or pepper (and eat the "bowl")**
- **Replace chicken or beef broth with a low sodium vegetable juice or vegetable puree**
- **Use salsa in place of ketchup (make your own salsa!)**
- **Puree vegetables such as roasted red pepper or squash to use as a delicious and savoury sauce over lean meats or fish**